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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/069,578

02/27/2002

Takeshi Shibuya

ASA-1070

3832

24956

7590

05/22/2006

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EXAMINER

CROSS, LATOYA I

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1743

DATE MAILED: 05/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/069,578

Applicant(s)

SHIBUYA ET AL

Examiner

LaToya I. Cross

Art Unit

1743

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 May 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1, 12 and 13 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-11, 14 and 15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>2/27/02</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of group II, claims 2-11 and 14 in the reply filed on May 19, 2005 is acknowledged. Claim 15 has been added to the claims of group II since it depends on independent claim 14. Accordingly, only claims 1, 12 and 13 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to non-elected subject matter.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
3. Claims 2-11, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In independent claim 2, the claim's preamble has language similar to a Jepson claim. However, the claim does not set forth an improvement. It is unclear as to whether the structural components recited prior to the "comprising" linking phrase are intended to be a part of the claimed invention.

Similarly, claim 4 defines the pretreatment rack position. The pretreatment rack is not positively recited as a component in claim 2. Clarification is needed.

In independent claim 8, the claim's preamble has language similar to a Jepson claim. However, the claim does not set forth an improvement. It is unclear as to whether the structural components recited prior to the "comprising" linking phrase are intended to be a part of the claimed invention.

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Claim 10 defines the analysis units; however, the analysis units are not positively recited as a component in claim 8.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

6. Claims 2-11, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US patent 6,409,968 to Takahashi in view of Japanese patent 02066461 to Tanimizu et al.

Takahashi disclose an automatic analysis apparatus for biological fluid samples. The apparatus comprises a reaction disk (2) onto which multiple reaction containers are held. Sample containers (5) are held on sample disk (11) and each sample container has a sampling position. A computer (12) controls the movement and motion of each mechanism throughout the system. The computer is also responsible for comparing the results of each analysis with reference values to judge whether or not re-analysis for each of the samples is necessary. A sample pipetting device (6) having a pipette nozzle functions in

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taking-up and discharging sample into the reaction containers. Takahashi also discloses a rack transfer mechanism (27, 31) that operates to transfer the rack from a transfer line to the rack receiving area. Rack transfer mechanisms (29, 33) serve to transfer the rack after pipetting to the transfer line.

Takahashi differs from the instant invention in that there is no disclosure a rack standby disk.

Tanimizu et al teach an automatic analysis apparatus, similar to the one disclosed by Takahashi, which uses a movable rack for moving sample containers and having the function of re-analyzing samples. The analyzer of Tanimizu et al comprises a rack standby table (73) that moves the specimen rack to a specimen rack standby position (24), which contains a reciprocally movable rack transfer table.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate a rack standby table into the analyzer of Takahashi as a manner for allowing first analysis of the sample to take place, then allow the computer to determine whether re-analysis is necessary, without having to prematurely send the samples to the next analysis and back through the entire system to perform re-analysis.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LaToya I. Cross whose telephone number is 571-272-1256. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700